

Renews Call for Clear Benchmarks and Exit Strategy

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) voiced support for President Obama's new strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan and his commitment to eliminating Al Qaeda following the president's speech on Tuesday. The Congressman also indicated he will be looking for further details demonstrating a focus on Al Qaeda in Pakistan, not nation-building in Afghanistan, as well as specific details regarding clear, measurable benchmarks that would trigger an exit strategy if we are successful or a fallback to an alternative strategy if our goals are not being met.

"I understand the legitimate concerns many have about sending more American servicemembers to Afghanistan, as well as the cost of the mission when we have so many pressing needs here at home," said Congressman Sestak. "But I believe the plan the President outlined is necessary, achievable and justified. It will allow us to finally complete a mission that is as important today as it was eight years ago: the elimination of the Al Qaeda terrorists who struck us on 9/11."

Congressman Sestak's views are formed by his unique foreign policy background. As Director

for Defense Policy on President Clinton National Security Council, he took part in all aspects of military decision-making and later in his career had a role in developing and executing strategies to win the war against terrorism. He has firsthand experience in Afghanistan, having witnessed conditions on the ground there early in the conflict as Director of the Navy antiterrorism unit, "Deep Blue."

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clintons Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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